

President, Board of Directors:
John Mercier



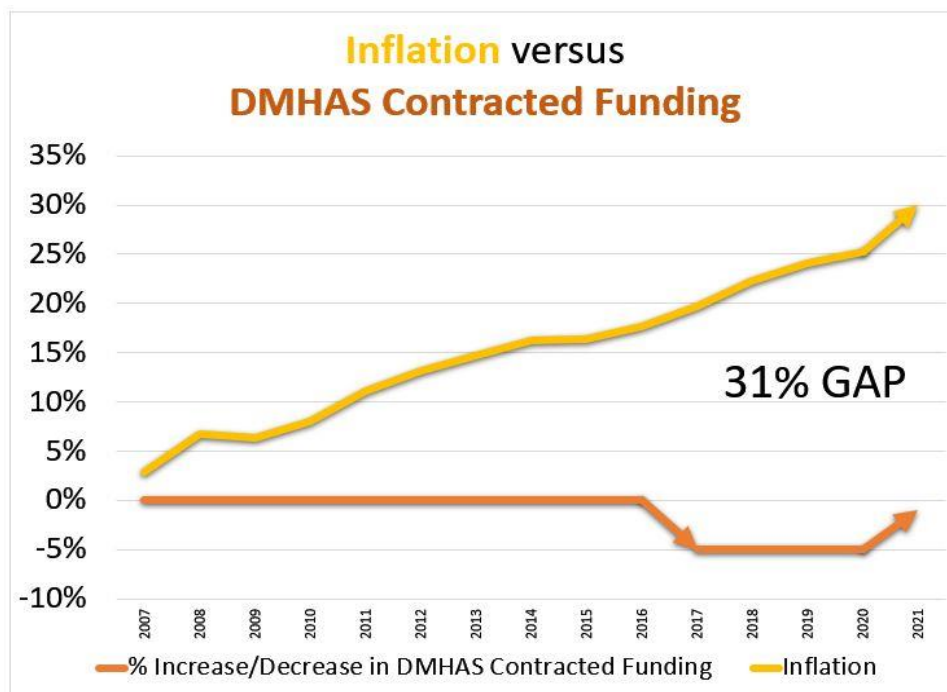
Chief Executive Officer:
Carrie Dyer

Appropriations Committee Public Hearing
HB 5037: An Act Adjusting the State Budget for the Biennium ending June 30, 2023
February 24, 2022 | 2:00 pm | Zoom

Good afternoon/evening, Senator Osten, Representative Walker, ranking members Miner and France and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Carrie Dyer and I am the CEO of Reliance Health, a community mental health non-profit organization that contracts with the Connecticut Departments of Developmental Services and Mental Health and Addiction Services. We have proudly served Eastern Connecticut for over 45 years and have evolved to meet the changing needs of our community. I am speaking in support of correcting the historic underfunding of the nonprofit sector and establishing a plan to recognize and adjust for inflation in a clear and dedicated way.

Our agency received no funding increase for 10 years between 2007 and 2017 and then suffered a 5% budget cut in 2017. Last year, in 2021, we received a 4% budget boost. That leaves us 1% below our 2007 funding while facing expenses that align with a cumulative 31% rate of inflation. Here's how that looks:



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501(c)3 tax exempt agency • www.reliancehealthinc.org

Programs accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities



Within these confines, Reliance Health is expected to properly maintain 18 properties, absorb business and health insurance costs, implement updated and upgraded technologies, onboard and retain staff with a living wage, provide educational opportunities, meet heightened electronic documentation standards, and keep up with expenses for food, utilities, vehicles, gas, etc.

Chronic and persistent underfunding in conjunction with the pandemic is breaking us. Our waiting lists are absurdly long, programs are understaffed, and the demand for services escalates. Inadequate fiscal support results in failing those who need us most.

Testifying for proper funding should not be an annual event. Each year we try a different tactic to shed light on the circumstances the State of Connecticut imposes on the nonprofit sector. The onus is put on us to plead our case, tell the stories, advocate for proper recognition, and suggest solutions for a broken system. The process is degrading and backward.

We have created fiscally responsible systems of care that are responsive to community needs, reflective of state projects and best practices, adaptive to the changing landscape, and designed to focus on the strengths of those we serve. While the Legislature's focus on new mental health and substance use initiatives is highly commendable, they will ultimately suffer if the nonprofit foundation is not reinforced.

Please match our unwavering dedication to the people of Connecticut by allocating the resources necessary to restore, reinforce, and sustain the safety net that is the private, nonprofit sector.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,


Carrie Dyer
Chief Executive Officer